



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: June 12, 2020

Agenda Item: Madison River Recreation Management Environmental Assessment (R3)

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 2 hours

Background:

This Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses recreation management on the Madison River from the outlet of Quake Lake downstream to its confluence with the Jefferson River. It was developed after extensive input from the public, Fish and Wildlife Commission, and a Negotiated Rule Making Committee. The goal of this EA is to consider a variety of alternatives in order ***to manage recreation use of the Madison River in a manner that: 1) ensures long-term health and sustainability of the fisheries; 2) diversifies angling opportunity while reducing conflicts; and 3) sustains the ecological and economic benefits of the river to Montanans and our guests.***

The EA considers multiple alternatives and compares them for their ability to meet the three goals stated above. The alternatives were analyzed for their impacts to recreation, physical environment, natural resources, heritage resources and economic resources.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

If approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission a public comment period will begin. During the public comment period FWP will host public meetings for the communities of Ennis, West Yellowstone, Bozeman and Butte. After the public comment period FWP will weigh and balance public input to develop a Management Plan and River Recreation Rule for presentation to the commission. If the commission approves the draft rule notice there will be an additional public comment period for the specific rule. Ideally, the river recreation rule will be implemented in 2021.

Alternatives and Analysis:

The commission could approve the EA be released for public comment as written, alter the EA prior to release for public comment or, not release the EA for public comment. The department has heard from the outfitting community and from general anglers that they are anxious to review and comment on measures to address recreation management on the Madison River.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale:

FWP recommends that the commission approve the EA for release to the public as it is written. There is an array of alternatives within the EA, that the department has analyzed but, public input from a broad range of constituents is necessary in order to complete the analysis.

Proposed Motion:

I move the commission approve the Madison River Recreation Management Environmental Assessment for release for public comment.